

VZCZCXRO7596
RR RUEHBZ RUEH DU RUEHJO RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEHLS #0218/01 0571243
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 261243Z FEB 07
FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3979
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 LUSAKA 000218

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ZA](#)
SUBJECT: ZAMBIA POLITICAL ROUNDUP

Refs: A) 06 Lusaka 688 B) 06 Lusaka 1694 and previous; C) Lusaka 155
D) 06 Lusaka 1518

1. (U) Topics Covered:

- United Party for National Development Seeks Pact with MMD
- Hakainde Hichilema to Join MMD?
- Trouble in the UDA
- Mwanawasa and MMD Look to the Future
- ULP's Bob Sichinga Quits
- Defiance in Patriotic Front
- Parliamentary Election Petition Update

UPND Seeks Pact with MMD

1. (SBU) Zambia political parties continue to maneuver to consolidate strengths, repair damage, and prepare for the future in the aftermath of the September 2006 presidential and parliamentary elections. Political commentators speculate that the United Party for National Development (UPND) is seeking a political pact with the ruling Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD) as MPs look to shore up their flagging prospects for re-election on the party ticket. The UPND suffered a severe blow when its founder and president Anderson Mazoka died in May 2006 (Ref A) and was further weakened during the presidential campaign, when members of the party's leadership defected after alleging tribalism in the party ranks. Most recently, UPND Vice President Patrick Chisanga quit the party (Ref B). UPND MPs are said to be seeking an agreement that would allow them to stand for election on the MMD ticket in 2011.

Hichilema to Join MMD?

2. (SBU) UPND president Hakainde Hichilema may also be looking to improve his national political prospects. Although Hichilema received more than 25 percent of the vote in the presidential election, many believe that he irreparably damaged his prospects for office during the last campaign, when he closely identified himself with the Tonga tribe that forms the UPND's base. Sebastian Kopulande, former Special Advisor to President Mwanawasa, recently told PolOff that, because of his perceived tribal leanings, Hichilema does not stand a chance of gaining a national following in Zambia. UNZA Professor of Political Science Neo Simutanyi agreed, and told PolOff that he would not rule out the possibility that Hichilema may try to jump ship to the MMD in order to take advantage of the party's national organization. As discussed below in paragraph 6, President Mwanawasa may be agreeable to a Hichilema candidacy on the MMD ticket--though other party stalwarts might be less enthusiastic.

3. (SBU) Not surprisingly, the UPND denies that it is pursuing a pact with the MMD. UPND Chairman spokesperson, Charles Kakoma emphasized that Hichilema, has not consulted with the MMD, adding that the National Management Committee (NMC) -- the party's policy

making body -- has not discussed the matter. Despite Kokoma's denials, at least ten UPND MPs (led by Mbabala and Kalomo MPs Emmanuel Hachipuka and Request Muntanga), were recently reported to have been pushing for a pact with the ruling party. MMD spokesman and Deputy Minister of Works and Supply, Ben Tetamashimba confirmed to media sources that some UPND MPs had approached him over a possible pact with the MMD.

Trouble in the UDA

¶4. (SBU) To add to the UPND's difficulties, the United Democratic Alliance, the three-party alliance anchored by the UPND, (the other two participating parties are the Forum for Democratic Development (FDD) and the United National Independence Party (UNIP)) could be nearing an end. As has always been the case in the UDA, the question of leadership is at the center of the alliance's crisis, which was sparked by FDD President Edith Nawakwi's announcement in November that she intended to contest the 2011 presidential elections on the UDA ticket. Nawakwi's announcement displeased Hichilema, who had previously indicated that he would be UDA's presidential candidate in 2011. Not to be left out of the family feud, UNIP Vice President Njekwa Anamela sharply criticized the UPND and its leadership for attempting to recruit UNIP members to join the party. The developments are likely to create big, possibly fatal, cracks in the alliance.

Mwanawasa and MMD Look to the Future

¶5. (SBU) The MMD has also been focusing on its political future. At the party's National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting held on February 11, 2007, President Mwanawasa informed the NEC that he will not re-contest the MMD presidency when his term of office expires at the party's next convention, scheduled for 2009 or 2010.

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Consequently, the posts of MMD President and MMD Vice President (currently vacant) will be filled at that convention. The President made clear that he would not select his successor, but would leave that task to MMD leaders and members. Mwanawasa encouraged members to look within and outside the party for a candidate with integrity and high morals.

¶6. (SBU) Although the President did not name any potential candidates, commentators took his statement that the MMD should look outside the party for its next leader to be an implicit endorsement of Hichilema. Mwanawasa appears to favor Hichilema -- the UPND leader has recently been seen visiting State House and he was a prominent presence at the state dinner in honor of Chinese President Hu Jintao (Ref C). Moreover, Hichilema has been publicly supportive of Mwanawasa and the MMD and the two leaders appear to have few differences. In contrast, Mwanawasa is reportedly unhappy with MMD National Secretary, Katele Kalumba, whom he has accused of secretly campaigning for the MMD presidency. Kulumba recently appeared in court on corruption charges and many perceived the President's statement that the next MMD leader should be a person of high morals and integrity to be a direct rebuff to the National Secretary.

United Liberal Party's Bob Sichenga Quits

¶7. (SBU) United Liberal Party (ULP) Vice President, Robert "Bob" Sichinga resigned from the ULP and formally retired from politics. In announcing his retirement, Sichinga said at a press briefing that he would set up a Trust -- which will be a non-partisan institution -- to provide political, social, and economic and governance consultancy services.

Defiance in Patriotic Front

¶8. (SBU) In an extension of his strategy to direct national politics from the city and local government level, Patriotic Front (PF) President, Michael Sata, recently directed that PF Mayors and Councilors would not be allowed to attend state functions or even

receive President Mwanawasa when he travel to their towns. Sata's directive breaks with tradition; historically mayors and councilors have been non-partisan and participated in all state functions. The new policy created a divide within the PF when, during the February 3-5 visit of Chinese President Hu Jintao, Lusaka Mayor, Susan Nakazwe, and other PF Councilors defiantly attended State functions that involved the Chinese leader. Sata threatened to discipline the rebellious officials, but has not taken any action.

Parliamentary Election Petitions

19. (SBU) Losing candidates in the September 28 parliamentary elections filed election petitions in 18 constituencies (Ref D). Most of the petitions contain similar allegations of electoral malpractice and irregularities, including that winning candidates improperly influenced voters with food, money and clothing materials, ferried voters to polling stations on polling day, and caused traditional rulers to issues threats against opponents. Several of the petitions have been resolved:

-- Lukashya Constituency: Former Vice President Lupando Mwape, who petitioned the election of PF's Alfredah Mwamba, withdrew his petition -- to take up his new appointment as Zambia's Ambassador to the People's Republic of China.

-- Malole Constituency: The Lusaka High Court dismissed PF candidate Matildah Mutale's petition of the election of independent candidate Emmanuel Munaile. Although the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) agreed that it erroneously declared Munaile the winner of the Malole seat, although he received 6,616 votes to Mutale's 7,214 votes, the court dismissed Mutale's petition, finding that he had not signed the affidavit in support of the petition, as required by law. Mutale appealed the decision to the Supreme Court.

-- Kabushi Constituency: MMD's Geoffrey Mukala petitioned the election of PF's Lombani Msichili. However, the case became moot when Mukala died in January, 2007.

-- Milanzi Constituency : MMD's Rosemary Banda (former Minister of Gender in Development in 2006) petitioned the election of UDA's Dr. Chosani Njovu. The High Court dismissed the petition, finding that it was not filed within the 30-day deadline.

-- Isoka West Constituency: ULP's Bob Sichinga petitioned the election of MMD's Paul Sichamba. Sichinga later resigned from the ULP (see para 7) and withdrew the petition, saying that he did not want to divide the people of Isoka West.

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